

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
RETREAT MINUTES

July 11, 2013  
5:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Lewis Creek Park

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Simas, Commissioners Bishop, Lampe, Larrivee, Tanaka, Zahn

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Jokinen

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Dave Berg, Eric Miller, Kevin McDonald, Franz Loewenherz, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Conrad Lee, Interim City Manager Brad Miyake

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Simas who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Bishop who arrived at 5:47 p.m., and Commissioner Jokinen, who was excused.

3. WELCOMING COMMENTS

Mayor Lee welcomed the Commissioners, and particularly new Commissioner Janice Zahn, and noted that retreats serve as an opportunity to reflect on the year gone by, to ask questions, to make observations, and to focus on the future. He said he is in regular communication with the Chair and Vice-Chair and stressed that it is communication that makes for a successful relationship.

Mayor Lee commented that the city has faced an interesting financial situation over the past two years, but despite that a great deal of work has been done, including some transportation projects. Many believe the economy has turned the corner and is coming back; if that is true, there will just be that much more work for staff and the Commission to do.

The City Council has consistently talked about economic development, but it has not in the past really focused proactively on the growth that has occurred in the city. The fact is locally and globally it is a very competitive world and strategic actions will need to be taken. Transportation infrastructure will certainly need to be part of the mix.

The work under way on the Downtown Livability Initiative and a steering committee is being co-chaired by Chair Simas. The recommendations to come from the steering committee will undoubtedly include transportation and infrastructure components. The Commission is already working in a lead role capacity on the Downtown Transportation Plan update. The downtown is critical to the economic success of the city, and mobility in and out of the downtown is a key element. The Commission is also at work updating the city's Transit Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan, including the Transportation Element, and will soon take up the work to update the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan and the Capital Investment Program.

Mayor Lee said the City Council could not effectively conduct the work of the city without the role played by the Transportation Commission. He said the Council appreciates the work of the Commission and values the recommendations and advice that get forwarded to the Council from the Commission. The Commissioners were encouraged to continue doing excellent work for the benefit of the city.

#### 4. SHORT BRIEFING CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Interim City Manager Brad Miyake thanked the Chair for inviting him to address the Commission. He also thanked the Commission for the work it does on behalf of the city. He briefly reviewed the updates and initiatives that are under way and noted the Commission's involvement in many of them. He highlighted the diversity initiative and noted that about 40 percent of the city's population is foreign born, thus the work to update the city's diversity plan. The planning initiatives currently under way include the work to implement the Shoreline Master Program and the storm water comprehensive plan, both of which are taking up quite a bit of staff time. Additionally, the mid-biennium budget update will need to be completed before the end of the calendar year.

Internally there is a lot going on as well. The One City initiative is focused on process improvement, innovation and shared leadership. In the annual citizen survey the services provided by the city always receive high ratings. Much of what contributes to that is a happy and satisfied workforce, and the annual employee survey has also returned some high satisfaction numbers despite some pretty large budget reductions over the past couple of years.

The city is facing a time of transition. There is a lot of activity going on and a lot of competing demands, and at the same time the city is still operating on a constrained financial plan that definitely impacts the work of the Commission. Nonetheless, the work of the Commission is vital to the success of the city and is appreciated at all levels.

Chair Simas asked Mr. Miyake to comment on the Budget One process, particularly how well it went the first time around, what changes if any will be made to it, and what role the city's boards and commissions should play in the process. Mr. Miyake said Budget One kicked off initially four years ago as a work in progress. In the first round it was a struggle to determine what role if any the city's boards and commissions should play. During the second iteration of

the process some fine tuning was made, but admittedly it is still not clear what role the boards and commissions should have. During the 2014 cycle all of the assumptions will be revisited, and any suggestions for what should be done will be welcomed.

Mayor Lee said the Budget One process is good in that it involves everyone, particularly the city staff. The process makes clear all the operations of the city and their importance. Originally the Council wanted to have the boards and commissions more involved, but that did not happen until the second round, and hopefully they will be more involved in the next round. The process has, however, worked well and has been well received.

## 5. STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Transportation department director Dave Berg said the Budget One process is one of the major changes faced by the department over the last couple of years. He said it was the work of the Commission on the Transportation Facilities Plan that guided the transportation priorities that went into the budget process.

The East Link project has taken up much of the city's efforts over the last couple of years. The final alignment decision and subsequent endorsement by the Sound Transit board in April has put the city on a committed path. The planning and environmental work is done and the next steps will focus on design and capital programming. Assistant Director for Planning Bernard van de Kamp left a hole in the department with his recent departure, but Paula Stevens has been hired and she will be on board by the end of August.

There continues to be a lot of work behind the scenes to coordinate regionally with the county, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). In conjunction with WSDOT, the non-motorized project on Northup Way between 108th Avenue NE and the SR-520 trail, which has been a high priority for the Commission for some time, is funded for design and right-of-way acquisition, and the design work is under way. Some early planning work has been done on the southbound I-405 off-ramp to NE 10th Street, and on the Eastside transit HOV project along SR-520, which will have impacts on city streets. Further to the east on SR-520, early design work is underway for the interchange at 124th Avenue NE.

Mr. Berg said a month or so ago the street maintenance function, which was housed in the utilities department, transferred over the transportation department, adding some 30 employees. The change provides for a better alignment of the gamut of transportation from policy to funding to day-to-day implementation.

One thing the Budget One process has done is emphasized visibility of the work done by the transportation department, and has put the focus on performance management and performance measures. The good news is that what was promised is being achieved.

The Commissioners were reminded that the department recently won national awards for three projects: the 108th Avenue NE non-motorized improvements, the work to restore West Lake Sammamish Parkway after the slide, and the work of Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services to reach out to the neighborhoods.

Projects and initiatives that are under way include the work to update the Downtown Transportation Plan and the Transit Master Plan, both of which involve the Commission and both of which will feed into the next Comprehensive Plan update. The SCATS project has entered Phase IV implementation, and there is only one phase left to go. Stage 1 of the 120th Avenue NE project has broken ground and design work is under way for the next two stages. The NE 4th St. extension project is in design. West Lake Sammamish Parkway construction is underway and ahead of schedule. The Neighborhood Sidewalk Program, which involves the Commission, has two projects under way.

The issue of concurrency will be back on the table as part of the work to update the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. A number of questions will be grappled with as that process moves ahead. It is time to update the ped/bike plan again, and the Commission will certainly be involved in that effort. A couple of big jobs will be going to construction in late 2013 and in 2014: the second phase of the NE 4th Street extension from the railroad right-of-way to 120th Avenue NE, and the second phase of the 120th Avenue NE project in which finally the alignment with NE 8th Street will be addressed. The Sound Transit East Link project is in design. Utility relocation work will likely begin in 2014, and construction on the line itself will begin in 2015.

On top of all that work, private development is once again ramping up. While a good thing overall, that will add a layer of complexity to everything else the department is undertaking. And in 2014 the third iteration of the Budget One process will be undertaken; the work of prioritizing the transportation capital projects will involve the Commission.

Commissioner Lampe said the city is to be commended for taking on the leading edge technology SCATS program and asked if there is other new technology in the offing that could potentially improve transportation functions in the city. Mr. Berg said there are a number of new technologies being reviewed. There are many new systems focused on traveler information that are being deployed; the deployments have been primarily on freeway systems, but they could be adapted to the local level.

Commissioner Zahn asked how often are the department's performance measures reviewed and how they are used to make changes in approach and programming. Mr. Berg said much depends on the measure and the program, particularly where they are tied to trends that can only be determined over time. The department is currently revisiting many of the measures to make certain they are the right ones. The hope is to get to where the measures are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Given the anticipated new round of major development in the city, including transportation projects, Commissioner Larrivee asked if there is a plan in place to get people psychologically ready for the pain of possible traffic delays by keeping them fully informed. Mr. Berg said the department uses social media tools along with a variety of other methods to keep people informed. He agreed that for major projects it would make sense to take extra steps.

6. COMMISSION ACHIEVEMENT IN 2012-2013  
CIP RECOMMENDATIONS  
TFP AND TIP RECOMMENDATIONS  
NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK RECOMMENDATIONS

Commissioner Bishop said he has been disappointed that the Council establishes the principles for projects without seeking input from the Commission. Mayor Lee said the Council, working in conjunction with the staff, develop the principles for projects and studies. That is done both to guide the processes and to make sure everyone is on the same page. The principles are not crafted from thin air; they are based on solid reasoning, project importance and priorities. Even so, once principles are determined the Commission is free to advise the Council on possible modifications to them.

Commissioner Larrivee commented that by not being involved early in developing project principles, the Commission is left without sufficient background to fully understand its role. That can stem from the fact that anyone reading the principles may interpret them in a different way. Having the Commission engaged sooner could smooth the edges and make the discussions flow better.

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald commented that in the case of the Downtown Transportation Plan the Council in fact did seek input from the Commission on developing the principles. For that study, the principles ultimately were largely based on the budget that was approved by the Council. The things the Council wanted to see accomplished were the things the Council provided money to do, but on top of that the Council asked the Commission what else should be considered, and the Commission forwarded suggestions, many of which were incorporated. The Council then took the unusual step of having the Commission serve as a de facto CAC for the project.

Senior transportation planner Franz Loewenherz commented that the Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Council. In 2003 the Council adopted the 2003 transit plan by resolution based on the recommendation of the Commission. For the current Transit Master Plan process, the Council really wanted to broaden the engagement process to an informal discussion with all of the boards and commissions, which is why there have already been two joint discussion sessions and a third is about to occur. The Commission will ultimately be the referring body even under the nuanced approach.

Chair Simas pointed out that the Council played a key role in establishing the East Link route.

Going forward, the question is how the Commission will interact with the process in terms of making the transportation system viable for the city. Mayor Lee said the Council recognizes that transportation systems are regional by their very nature, and having light rail serve Bellevue will align the city with regional activities. The Council intends to take a bigger role in regional transportation issues, and the Commission will continue to concern itself with local transportation issues and concerns that will be impacted by the East Link project.

Chair Simas commented that as hot lanes are added to I-405, transit within the city of Bellevue will be affected. When the tolling on SR-520 was initiated, local streets in Bellevue were affected. Clearly regional transportation projects impact the work of the Commission. He asked if the Commission can expect to play an active role in regional issues going forward, or if it will continue to be a reactive body. Mayor Lee allowed that the Commission has traditionally been reactive and the Council has held onto the regional issues. He agreed that regional transportation issues have direct impacts on local transportation systems, and as regional decisions are made the Council will direct the Commission to address the local impacts.

Commissioner Tanaka suggested that while the Commission does not want to be tasked with making decisions on regional issues, there is great advantage to keeping the Commission up to date with regard to regional issues to better understand what the impacts will be on local transportation systems. Mayor Lee agreed that to the extent possible the Commission should be kept informed to void making decisions in a vacuum.

Commissioner Larrivee pointed out that the work of every board and commission could potentially be impacted by decisions relating to the East Link project and he asked if joint forums are planned to help guide the decisions that will go into making the line and the station locations memorable. He went on to say that stations can generate neighborhoods, and the city is in a position to help define those neighborhoods. Mayor Lee said there are plans to gain input from the city's committees as well as from the CAC appointed by the Council to address the station area planning process. Mr. Berg added that the focus of the group will be on the stations as well as on the half mile radius around each station.

Mr. McDonald said the work of the CAC is being managed by the Department of Planning and Community Development. The Transportation Commission has been involved in station area planning in conjunction with the Downtown Transportation Plan. The key to having a successful light rail station is making sure there is good access to and from the station. On the land use side is the Downtown Livability Initiative which also is linked in to the work on the downtown station. Outside of the downtown each station will be unique and each will need a separate process because of the associated issues.

Mr. Berg pointed out that the work being done by the Commission on the Transit Master Plan is informing the Council, and thus the staff, on how to engage with regional entities relative to transit services in and through Bellevue. While the Commission does not directly interface

with regional agencies, the recommendations of the Commission serve as the guidelines the staff use in relating with regional agencies.

Commissioner Bishop commented that following the last Commission meeting at which a presentation was made regarding the station area planning work, his eyes were opened to the fact that the Commission is going to be looking at a whole new set of capital projects associated with each station. Mayor Lee said the fact that there are so many moving parts points out the need for the boards and commissions to be involved.

Ms. Zahn asked if there is a plan showing all of the moving parts so everyone can understand what their respective roles are. Mayor Lee said the fact is it is all bits and pieces and they have not all been put into a single picture. Commissioner Zahn suggested that even a simple diagram indicating the various relationships would be helpful. Mr. Berg said a new East Link public information office/outreach person is set to come onboard soon. He said he would put the issue to her to see if something visual can be done.

Commissioner Larrivee suggested it might be time to revisit the role of the city's boards and commissions relative to regional issues. The fact is nearly every regional issue affects local jurisdictions, and decisions made by local jurisdictions often impact neighboring cities and regional systems. Mayor Lee agreed the Council could at least discuss the issue, but ultimately the focus needs to be on what approach will be the most practical.

Mr. Loewenherz thanked the Commission for the work done leading up to the communiqué to the Council regarding the market-driven strategy on the Transit Master Plan. The outcome truly was a regional issue statement and it was formulated through the forums involving city boards and commissions. The final product was a clear message that is informing the regional transit agencies and will find its way into the Comprehensive Plan as something that will continue to inform the city's regional strategies.

Returning to the issue of concurrency measures and whether or not the focus should be on the system as opposed to individual intersections, Chair Simas asked if the question is one the Commission will be taking up at some point in the future. Every time the Commission takes up a specific transportation plan, concurrency is viewed as one of the measures. If the primary measure is going to be changed, the Commission should have a say in its evolution. Mr. Berg said every jurisdiction tackles concurrency a little differently. A pilot project was undertaken several years ago in conjunction with the Puget Sound Regional Council that looked at a more multimodal approach. Clearly there are challenges involved. It is easier to model cars than pedestrians and even transit, and the pilot never really went anywhere. The question remains, however, of whether or not another approach to concurrency would be more efficient.

Mr. McDonald said Redmond includes a multimodal concurrency analysis in evaluating new projects and calculating mitigation. San Francisco is a leader in the area of multimodal concurrency; they look to the transit system as the workhorse fostering downtown mobility.

The state Growth Management Act allows for addressing concurrency in different ways, though the ultimate goal is to make sure infrastructure is in sync with land use growth. Staff currently plans to introduce a concept through the Comprehensive Plan update process; the focus will be on developing policy direction that will give the city momentum to look more thoroughly at the appropriate concurrency mechanism for Bellevue, and undoubtedly the Commission will be involved in that exercise.

Commissioner Bishop commented that one of the purposes of the CIP is to have a funded plan to provide for the level of service needed at the time of development. It is absolutely necessary to have a funding plan to pay for the projects needed to meet the needs of all permitted projects. Accordingly, the list of preferred projects on the CIP needs to be informed by what good they will do relative to concurrency. Mayor Lee said that based on the current interpretation of the concurrency standard, that is what happens. Commissioner Bishop said the problem is that the list of CIP projects is longer than what the city can fund, yet some of the unfunded projects might go a long way toward providing the capacity needed to meet the concurrency standard. The challenge will be in finding the approach and standards that will yield the best result.

7. COMMISSION AGENDA IN 2013-2014  
FINAL RECOMMENDATION FOR DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN  
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRANSIT MASTER PLAN  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE - TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT  
CIP BUDGET YEAR

With regard to the Downtown Transportation Plan, Mr. McDonald said on-street parking is the last substantive item to work on. The September 23 Council meeting agenda includes a two-hour discussion on the Commission's preliminary recommendations for the plan. With Council concurrence, the recommendations will be taken to the community for input before cycling back to the Commission for refinements. At that point the Downtown Livability initiative land use and transportation components will be merged in and the process will march toward a mid-2014 adoption by the Council. The overall outcome will be revisions to the downtown area policies and transportation projects to ensure multimodal mobility through 2030, and Land Use Code changes that will affect urban design and building form.

Mr. Loewenherz said the service element component of the Transit Master Plan has been completed and the focus has turned to the capital element. The work to craft the capital element will get into some of the same trade-offs regarding vehicle versus person throughput, and the kinds of priorities to be emphasized in the various corridors. The Transit Master Plan document is scheduled to be completed and taken to the Council for adoption in 2014.

Mr. Loewenherz said the 2014 work plan includes initiation of the work to update the ped/bike plan. The Commission will play a significant role in that process.



Mr. McDonald said the Commission will also play an active and robust role in the work to update the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission will work on the Transportation Element by focusing on emerging issues in need of being embedded in policy language, and will deal with the multiple project lists that are included in the Comprehensive Plan and the process of consolidating them into a single master list with the most current project descriptions. The Transportation Commission will make recommendations to the Planning Commission who has the lead where the Comprehensive Plan is concerned.

Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller noted that the diligent work done by the Commission on the Transportation Facilities Plan will be going forward to the Council on July 22 and could be adopted as early as August 5.

The TFP looks at the citywide priorities that come out of the individual plans in the Comprehensive Plan, and it becomes the source of candidate projects for the CIP update, though it is not the only source of projects. The recent annexation actions have brought with them some transportation needs. Newport Way has been highlighted as a priority and the anticipation is a proposal for funding will be developed in conjunction with the Commission.

Mr. Miller said the TFP was originally set to be submitted to the Council in June but inconsistencies were discovered in the land use data and the modeling done on that land use data in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. There was a desire to make sure everything in the document was accurate and correctly represented before publishing the Final Environmental Impact Statement. All of the revisions were relatively minor and have all been squared away. The Final Environmental Impact Statement will be published on July 25.

Mr. Miller noted that CIP projects are inflated to the year of expenditure in accord with the Council's adopted plan. The non-CIP projects in the TFP were, however, not inflated and they stood out by contrast. The decision was made to inflate them as well to 2020, one year past the current adopted CIP at a simple three percent rate. As projects are moved from the TFP into the CIP, the project scopes and cost estimates are recalculated.

8. DISCUSSION OF THE COMMISSION ROLE  
COMMISSION ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
IDENTIFYING PLAN PRINCIPLES  
SOUND TRANSIT WORK  
REGIONAL ISSUES

It was noted that discussion of these items had occurred earlier in the meeting.

9. RETREAT WRAP-UP

Chair Simas noted the need for the Commission to act to elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair.

A motion to nominate Chair Simas to serve another year as Chair was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tanaka.

There were no other nominations.

The nomination of Chair Simas to serve as Chair carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Commissioner Lampe to serve another year as Vice-Chair was made by Commissioner Larrivee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop.

There were no other nominations.

The nomination of Commissioner Lampe to serve as Vice-Chair carried unanimously.

Chair Simas opened the floor to comments from the public, but no one from the public chose to address the Commission.

Chair Simas invited new Commissioner Zahn to introduce herself and share a bit of her background. She said she has been in Bellevue for 19 years, married for 24 years, and has two daughters. She said she has been employed by the Port of Seattle since 2000, director of the construction management department for the last five years, and recently completed her Masters of Public Administration. She said her background is in civil engineering and has a masters in structural engineering.

Mayor Lee suggested that the recording of the meeting would be beneficial for the members of all the city's boards and commissions to listen to given the robust conversation and the depth of the questions asked.

Chair Simas thanked Mayor Lee for attending and also thanked the staff for their highly professional work.

Chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

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Secretary to the Transportation Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

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Date